

MY BLUE HEAVEN

the independent voice of the fans of Carlton S.C.

\$2



INSIDE

Exclusive interview with Lubo Lapsansky

Win a signed Carlton shirt

editorial

With the departure of Lou Sticca as General Manager it would seem the ideal time for the Carlton Board to have a long hard look at the club and try and build on the good foundations laid.

Unfortunately it seems (to me) that the club is losing the plot and neglecting its small but dedicated hardcore support. Post-match the club divides into a them and us situation. Many readers will remember the old days when after the match the players would pop into the bar for a drink and chat with the supporters in the supporters' bar. This was always an important facet of the club to the hardcore, it suggested a grass roots approach, where the ordinary fans and their opinions counted for something. Also the players could relate to the faithful few that turned up. Sadly nowadays the players are cloistered in the directors bar to hob nob with the chosen few and anyone else who can blag their way into that hallowed place. Whilst the true fans are paying more than nightclub prices to drink beer from plastic cups, the lucky few get to drink for free, out of glasses. Are they being rewarded for their stalwart commitment to the club they love? No. They are usually just on a corporate freebie and couldn't give a toss about Carlton.

The so-called reason for the new order is that the club is worried that the true fans won't behave themselves and may say something nasty to a player, it is also as a result of some ill behaved visitor having a go at Lou. So now the players and management are in the safe environment of the directors' bar with those well behaved corporate types. Their good behaviour includes getting very inebriated on the free piss and then vandalising the bar. The only time I've been in there (it was no great shakes to be honest) I was particularly unimpressed by the behaviour of a bunch of drunk idiots who thought it would be fun to uproot a rather lovely potted plant and wave it around. They managed to do this without getting hassled by the men in yellow who were too busy ensuring the riff raff didn't get in the bar in the first place.

The club has to be careful, with numbers dropping and the hardcore being disillusioned,

they need to remember where the future lies. Their priorities should lie with attracting more fans, not alienating the few they have to prostitute themselves to the corporate dollar.

As for blagging into the directors' bar, why should I? I'm a supporter and belong in the supporters' bar. I like meeting the players and having a chat, but don't think barging into the directors' bar where they are probably with family and friends is a great idea. If they want to talk to the fans, they know where we are. If they care about their loyal support then they know how they can reward this. There are a few of the team who pop still pop in to say g'day, they're usually the more committed on the pitch too (funny that). As for the directors, most of them seem so out of touch with the grass roots support they might as well live in Perth.

Sal

THE ACADEMY OF FOOTBALL

At the time of writing, the Carlton Academy side remain undefeated this season, and only two of those games ended in a draw. They have scored the most goals and conceded the least. The tally so far being 46 for and 7 against.

This can only augur well for the first team, creating plenty of competition for places. Already a couple of the Academy side have impressed in the first team. The top of the list (in my humble opinion) being Colin Azzopardi, who has done a great job in defence and has decent music taste to boot. Ange 'Moptop' Motsiopoulos has showed a lively presence upfront. In a practice match against Green Gully he looked particularly sharp and scored a beauty of a goal.

So next time you're early for the game have a look at the Academy game, you might get a treat and find some future favourites of your own.

Sal

NOW GORAN, IF STUART WON'T LET YOU HAVE A TOUCH OF THE BALL YOU CAN HAVE THIS ONE IF YOU PROMISE TO STOP KICKING IT OVER THE FENCE.



MY BLUE HEAVEN

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My Blue Heaven is also available from Melbourne Sports Books and Au Go Go Records.

Subscriptions \$8 for 3 issues (inc. postage) make

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POCKET DYNAMO

Michael W has a yak with the nicest guy ever to accumulate enough yellow cards to open a poker school; the incomparable Lubo.

When my interest in the NSL was re-ignited with the arrival of Carlton in the competition, and I began to watch the team in 1997, two players in particular used to put a gormless smile on my face week after week.

One was the insanely gifted (and plain insane) Kres Marusic, and the other went by the almost Vizesque name of Lubo Lapsansky. Just a few inches too tall to qualify as diminutive, Lubo was in the play so much it sometimes seemed he must have been cloned, with three of him on the park at once.

Kresimir of course headed North, then over to Belgium, where he's currently serving a six week ban, probably for cannibalising an opponent. Lubo, thank God is still running the Blues midfield, and working in tandem with Stabber, enormous amounts of possession are being won for us by these two dynamos who refuse to let anything faintly winnable fall the opposition's way.

He's a tenacious ball-winner, but Lubo is of course essentially a gifted ball-player, with a tremendous change of direction and pace. He is able to switch the complexion of the play at will, and is equally adept at a fifty metre through ball, or three metre flick to a runner. And when it comes to spectacular goals from distance, unfortunately a Carlton rarity these days, he's the king.

Lubo was born in Czechoslovakia, on the Slovakian side (er...the bit on the right) and grew up during the Russian occupation, but his was not really a life of deprivation, nor spraying "Spartak, Spartak. Who the fuck are Spartak?" on the side of tanks. "Basically we were just told that everything they did in America was wrong," he recalls (not a bad philosophy really; Reagan, McDonalds, Alexei Lalas, Ab Sculptors) "But I never cared too much, I just played soccer in summer, and in winter there was ice hockey and snow skiing. I wouldn't mind being 11 again to tell

you the truth!" His early heroes were Marco Van Basten, and Lothar Mattheas. Not Stalin.

The catalyst for his move downunder was Lubo's Melbourne born Slovakian girlfriend. At the time, in 1994, he had no idea if the game was even played seriously here, but he sent some videos of his time at Kosice in the Slovakian First Division to the Knights, who offered him a deal. And the Knights eventually won the league, yada, yada, yada.

Lubo moved to Carlton as a lynchpin in the squad for the inaugural season. He was out of contract at the Knights, and naturally drawn to the advantages of full-time professionalism. As one of the 'three year' brigade he has some interesting comments about Stuart Munro's approach compared to Eddie Krncevic. "The biggest difference between the two as coaches is that Stuey communicates with the players more than Eddie," says Lubo. "Eddie sort of said what he wanted from us, and if things went well, he was happy talking to everyone, but if they didn't, he didn't want to know. He didn't want to talk or communicate about what went wrong, or what we should change." Hairstyles probably.

I happened to see a training session at Doncaster recently Lubo, and noticed you were... how can I put this... picking on the younger players. Kicking the ball at them, not to them, at them etc. "Ha ha ha. Well when I was young I had to do things they'd never even think about. Washing, ironing, polishing boots. These days they don't even want to carry the stuff, help with the gear. So y'know." Yeah, you're one of those bullies I've been reading about.

Does the team enjoy beating South as much as the supporters do? "Oh, mate, oh definitely. I can't say for everybody, but me definitely. At the Knights we had them for afternoon tea 3-0, 4-1, 4-0. When I came to Carlton it was the same feeling but we

choked on the first game, then there was the 5-0 win.

"That game at Bob Jane recently was like winning the cup final, especially being 1-0 down and scoring two late goals. We copped it on the way to the rooms. I felt like I was in the showers already. Some of their supporters just think it's not possible for them to lose down there."

As I write this, the team is back in the six after an alarming dip, but still struggling to put teams to the sword, and surprisingly, the theories of the fans about what's gone wrong on the park at times find parity with Lubo's opinion; i.e teams are defending deep, and we're wasting possession with crosses from midfield, amongst other things.

"When we don't score an early goal despite putting all the pressure on a little bit of frustration has been creeping in to our game," he says. "Newcastle and Auckland basically put eleven behind the ball, and tried to hit us on the counter. We can't rely on getting late winners, or equalizers. It just seems we're demolishing teams in the first quarter of the game, but can't score the goals to take the pressure off us.

"As soon as you score they've got to come out, then that opens things up. Every team knows how we play and if they get their point, they're happy. But we have to win consistently at home."

And we don't seem to be able to get crosses in from the byline? "Joe Tricarico was about to have his best season ever at wing back, and Stu Slater was out for a long while, but yeah we've struggled to get to the byline and deliver quality crosses. We're stopping outside the box, and you can't do that all the time." So the formation is going to change. "We're going to 4-4-2, which will give more space to the right and left wings to push forward, without having to rush back and defend too. That's how I've played most of my soccer life, and I think it'll help us a lot." The switch to 4-4-2 at Gippsland certainly opened up the midfield, and allowed Con and Dixie to make some runs, but against Marconi it was back to 3-5-2.

Lubo's racing away with the player of the year trophy and seems to be in the top three every week. He must be chuffed with his own season? "I think

I've been consistent this year, and in midfield you really have to be. That's the main thing, so yeah, I'm pretty happy with that." Frankly, he's been outstanding in 99-00. Every time he gets the ball, which is all the time, because he wants it so much, he plays the right pass. Opening the flanks, or finding an attackers feet. Apart from one send off by a bollock-brained ref early in the season, he's also almost given up yellow cards. He's such a nice bloke to talk to, you imagine he actually could get a ref to change his mind too.

And which of those goals evokes the most spine-tingling memory? "I'd say the one against Adelaide at home last year, from about forty yards. But also one of the hardest was against Northern

Spirit away. I only had a metre or two to control it and a couple of steps to shoot. I don't score many goals so every one feels important."

And so having been chased around the house by his son, wanting some tennis tuition for the length of the interview I let Lubo get on with his moonlighting as the next John Newcombe, fully aware that if his determination to succeed this year catches on with the whole squad, we'll be there or thereabouts come the middle of the year.



LUBO'S PIE FIVE

How many times did Czechoslovakia appear in the World Cup Final?

"2" Correct

Who scored the last goal in the 4-4 draw with South?

"Andy Vlahos" Correct

Who did Mike Conroy score 28 goals for in one season?

"Oh...jeez....Fulham" Correct

Who wrote Fever Pitch?

"...mmm...na" Incorrect. Nick Hornby (Read your MBH!!)

In your favourite movie Spinal Tap, Harry Shearer of Simpsons fame, plays what in the band?

"Oh...can I have a clue?" Drums, guitar, or bass.

"Guitar?" HONK, bass.

3/5 Be afraid Lubo, be very afraid.

LOUIE LOUIE

Well surprises certainly don't come much bigger than the one that greeted me when I opened my e-mail from the club on 10th February 2000. I expected yet another of those e-mails telling me that training was to be held at 2.07pm and that kick off for the next home match was now at 3am on Thursday morning, so I wasn't really expecting anything along the lines of:

Melbourne, Thursday, February 10, 2000 IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CARLTON SOCCER CLUB
GENERAL MANAGER RESIGNS
Lou Sticca today announced his resignation as General Manager of the Carlton Soccer Club.

No matter what you thought of him, this was a surprise (God he must have been busting to tell someone) and a shock.

It therefore seems appropriate to look at the reign of Lou Sticca at the Carlton Soccer Club.

Love him or hate him, you certainly couldn't ignore him. Lou never hid, if you ever had a problem that you wanted sorting, or something you didn't understand that was going on at the club, you could always find him or phone him and put across your point of view. In response he was rarely stuck for words.

Lou, as far as I know, was the founding father of our club. He gave it its rather controversial name. Put the board together, found the manager, helped Eddie secure the players for our first season and then lived through the poor crowds and repercussions of this from the Carlton Football Club, all the way to the Grand Final in that first season. I think we should have known then that supporting this club was going to be one hell of a rollercoaster ride.

Through the problems of ownership which dogged the start of our second season, the arrival of Peter "Sorry I'm late, I've been surfing" Jess, the noisy supporters meetings, and the switch from Optus Oval, Lou was always there telling us how great it was going to be, and reminding us to remember the dream. However, while all this was going on, it

was clear that things were very wrong on the pitch, 1 point from 147 matches really isn't a very good return, and so his attention turned to matters on the pitch.

The supporters meeting at Melbourne Knights last season will always stick in my mind. There we were, hiding behind the trees, with Lou and two other directors of the club, discussing the pros and cons of our manager. Typical Carlton Soccer Club, typical Lou Sticca. He always wanted to know what we thought, and definitely let us know what he thought, whatever the location.

I interviewed him for this fanzine at the start of this season, and we discussed a number of issues, including how hard it was for him to let Eddie go, as this constituted a failure by Lou Sticca. Also how proud he was of our supporters, and how excited he was to be getting a kit which was exactly like Arsenal's, only blue.

But there was a change in his tone, even if it only now makes sense. He might never admit it, but the pressure was on. Things on the pitch were sorted, he was very confident about Stuart Munro, but off the pitch the club was still failing, which reflected on his administrative skills. He knew he had to put it right, or face the music. One mistake he definitely made was not to give the True Blues a space of their own. I offered a number of suggestions over a period of time, but none were considered suitable. It appeared obvious to me that the bar at the end of the Western Grandstand should be ours, but for whatever reasons, I could speculate about here, but won't, it wasn't considered appropriate. Bad mistake.

There was also the debacle over the shirts, with some people's still failing to arrive 10 weeks into the season. When you spend A\$100 on your team's kit, you want to wear it loud and proud like every other supporter on the planet, these things matter.

Perhaps this marked a change in Lou's priorities, leaving the True Blues feeling disenfranchised. A



lot of people have complained that the True Blues have been doing nothing this season, which isn't true, we are probably working harder than ever. But with no place to call our own, and the divide between us and the club seemingly growing into a chasm, we have been running to stand still.

However, as usual at Carlton, there was something else to focus on, which was the teams generally excellent, if sometimes erratic, form on the pitch, which culminated in our fine win at Lakeside over South Melbourne. However this was marred somewhat by a brief altercation between Lou and some of our supporters outside the dressing room. This would never have happened previously, and although he'll never admit it, revealed a man under pressure, and who had perhaps lost touch with the core support. Something had to give.

That said, Lou was a committed True Blue member and a staunch supporter of this fanzine. When we had problems with Olympic Park at the start of the season, threatening to call police because we were hawking on their forecourt without a licence, Lou was straight in there, telling them we were an integral part of the club, and a permit to sell, not just on the forecourt, but inside the stadium, was ours within days. When we also had the idea of a competition for a signed shirt (being run elsewhere in this issue), we had one within days, no questions asked, the side of Lou many people don't see.

Which bring us to Lou's resignation. Goodbye Lou, we'll all miss you. The person who takes your place will certainly have a lot to live up to. Whilst it was never smooth, I'd rather have Lou Sticca, for all his faults, than some sterile sports administrator, which they seem to breed at the AFL.
COME ON YOU BLUES!!

Richard Roberts

FLAGGING A PROBLEM

How stupid are Soccer Australia?

Not so fast! Before you answer, consider this.

When Carlton hosted the women's international at Oly Park featuring the USA and the Czech Republic some of our American friends decided to support their team by flying the ol' star spangled banner. Well, Soccer Australia has an edict that prevents any flags other than the Australian one from being flown at NSL grounds. We all know that this is openly flouted by a couple of NSL clubs who shall remain nameless (as well as useless and clueless), and Soccer Australia refuse to take action.

So pity the poor US fans who were told to take their flag down! The same thing has happened to people bringing the Brazilian flag. This came to a head recently when someone brought along a Scottish flag to a Carlton game and the Soccer Australia official told a Carlton official to take it down. Our brave man at the front did what all right thinking people do these days - he just said 'no'.

The Soccer Australia official also did a wobbly when an Aboriginal flag was brought to our game. 'Take it down,' the moronic SocAus patsy said. 'No' came the reply from the equally forthright Carlton man.

Perhaps the SocAus cultural attache didn't appreciate that one of Carlton's Directors is the manager of an athletics superstar who knows a thing or two about flags.

Alf Garnett

Y2K Glitches We Wish Happened

1. Soccer Australia inundated with offers from TV executives offering millions to telecast the NSL
2. Carlton win the FIFA world club championship, defeating Man Utd 3-1
3. Channel Nine news showed a soccer story...ANY soccer story
4. 80,000 turn up for derby between Carlton and South Melbourne at MCG
5. Pele to coach the Socceroos
6. Frank Farina to coach England
7. Oceania to get a direct entry for qualifying for the World Cup
8. Top world clubs with FULL lineups battling for spots to play Australia in tournament in Jan 2000
9. Australia to host the 2010 World Cup tournament
10. Soccer Australia Board sacked

Trumper

LIGHTS, CAMERA, FALL OVER !

First I have to deal with Deans. I tread on the ball. TAKE 2. First I have to deal with Deans. A dummy to the left throws his balance and I round him stylishly, the ball glued to the outside of my right foot. But who's this? It's Slim 'Dead Set Legend' Macpherson. He stands in my path to goal, like... like a really tall Scottish defender. I feign a shot and he sticks a leg out. Ha! Before he can recover, I'm past him on the left. Only the goalie to beat. Dean 'No undies for me' Anastasiadis. He picks the right corner, but my timing and placement are too good. Wahaaaay!!!!

This actually happened, but in choreographed slow motion so gentle, several ants and a beetle overtook me on the way to the goals. But what the hell was I doing larking about with serious professionals at training anyway? Let's rewind a bit first.

The whole CD thing has been a bit of a financial gamble which will hopefully eventually pay itself off. We knew that we might fall short at the start. (CD singles cost the same as CD albums to manufacture, so naturally the return to the artist/company is much less).

The problem was, even if we were going to lose our pants, we would have forged ahead, blind and deaf to the consequences, because the song was begging to be recorded. It wasn't one of those home-recording off-cuts you play back and forget about. It took on a momentum of its own.

The chorus was one of those flukes you think you must have stolen, because they sound too catchy for your own mediocre abilities. But as far as I know it wasn't subliminal theft, and the verses sat nicely, and then stumbling on that D#min in the lead break. Yeah well anyway. So the general vibe was a kind of 'Oh shit, we're going to have to follow this through aren't we?'

We knew we'd probably be able to knock up a record that appealed to a lot of Carlton fans, but we never dreamed about the other stuff that's been happening.

The reason we were kicking about with the players on a 34 degree afternoon at Doncaster was due to a cryptic, but most welcome request from Western Union Football; a half hour

magazine type TV programme which is a viewing must for footy fans in 100 countries. (SBS use their stories a bit on Saturdays too actually)

The company that puts the program together in London had somehow heard about 'A Dream Won't Do', and asked their Melbourne freelance contacts to go out and do a story on it. We were gobsmacked. 'What? Our little record?' A hundred countries, many of whom would tune in by the mega-million (Alex's dad once saw Alex make an appearance on the Brazilian version) That'd be, er 300 million or more viewers worldwide.

So with journo Angus Morgan (who you'd recognize from ABC news) and Joe the camera bloke, we went back into the studio and mimed the song, and I did an interview skillfully swapping my usual miserabilist mumble for an up tempo, easy to understand enthusiasm about the record and the team, wanking on about our tactical strengths and pretending all the while I was Rivaldo or Batistuta, with the world hanging on my every word.

Then we convoyed it out to Doncaster, and as well as pretending to beat the defence, managed to coax half a dozen very reluctant, and sheepish players to do a reasonable can-can while Martin W and I sang the song at what we hoped was the right tempo. A moment so surreal I'm praying it's included in the final cut. Joe the cameraman took some footage of the serious training too, and I still don't think the players actually know what the hell was going on. I felt entitled to ask them to do anything because the publicity for the club overseas was going to be invaluable, but they might have thought we were just doing a cheap film clip with our mates for the 4am slot on Rage!

There was also a horrific moment when I attempted a fancy Dan curling free kick, which pitifully failed to follow the trajectory I'd hoped for and instead hit Dixie (who wasn't watching) in the back of the legs, flattening him. This was when we had 2 and a half defenders available, him being one of them. If the gaffer had seen it, I'd still be eating through a straw I reckon.

A few weeks later Optus's 'Soccer Central' arrived on our doorstep to more or less repeat the whole process.

The TV coverage naturally has been the most unexpected, and frankly unbelievable episode in our adventure but all along the way, we've been rewarded in small ways, which have made the headache of releasing our own CD without record company assistance well worth the trouble.

Our first triumph I suppose was that Lou and Jerome thought the song was great and wanted to talk turkey. Although my invitation for them to pay all our bills was politely turned down, they've supported us in a variety of other ways. Initially by having the song played at the park, then selling it in merchandise, advertising it relentlessly on the net and in the programme etc. And letting me quaff free bourbons in the Chairman's room, while ostensibly looking for unsuspecting punters with my Myer bag full of shiny discs. I have a sneaking suspicion some of the socialites in that toff's room aren't actually Carlton fans.

There's been some nefarious goings on amongst the players though. I couldn't sell Alex one, then a few weeks later, I did the hard sell on Steve Martin, and he said there was already one at his place because he lives with Alex. 'Hang on.' I thought. 'Oh, whatever.' I think a few of the lads have been LENDING! BASTARDS! Michael Conroy had the best excuse though. His CD player is in England. As a matter of record, nearly every player has coughed up happily (whilst demanding to know why they weren't on the cover etc)

The competition to win the CD in Inside Soccer, coming as it did the week after the invitation to 'win an autographed Amy Taylor Matildas poster' looked like... um... a potential dud to say the least, but apparently entries flooded in. God knows from where!

I was particularly chuffed when Beat magazine included the CD in their Top 10 records playing on the office stereo. It convinced me that we'd produced something more than a novelty, and that the CD had genuine appeal beyond the rank and file of Blues diehards.

Airplay has been solid, and by the time you read this we will hopefully have had a giant piss-up / belated launch. But in all honesty I'd swap it all for the chance to hear the song played one last time in May as our guys hold the trophy aloft. That really would see the tears flowing.

Michael W

"A Dream Won't Do"

(The Lyrics that John West Rejected)
by True Blue Tone

Last season left us in despair
Although we tried to play it fair
Our form was neither here nor there
And Cervinski wouldn't cut his hair
Despite requests to
From me and you
C'mon, C'mon, C'mon!

Our strikers wouldn't even shoot
When Eddie wore his Riddler suit
Lou really couldn't give a hoot
Coz he'd be giving him the boot

When the season was through
What else could he do?

C'mon, C'mon, C'mon!

Before the season's final round
We tried to change our home ground
But after running all around
Supporters still could not be found

At Olympic Park
It was very dark

C'mon, C'mon, C'mon!

The season started goals galore
But in the end we couldn't score
I wondered what I was going for
When it all seemed like such a bore

But the fans stood strong
We know where we belong

C'mon, C'mon, C'mon!

So now we've got a new brigade
Look at the impact that we've made
It seems we've finally made the grade
But you should see what they're paid!

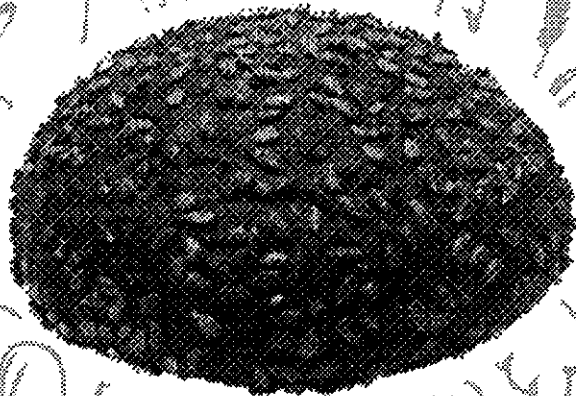
Our players earn so much,
And still can't get a touch!

C'mon, C'mon, C'mon!

GET YOUR COPY!!!

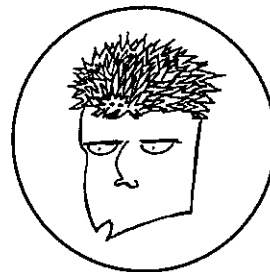
The excellent CD 'A dream won't do' by Lust in Space is available from the merchandising stall on matchday and wherever you see Michael and his Myer's bag.

The Beautiful Grain



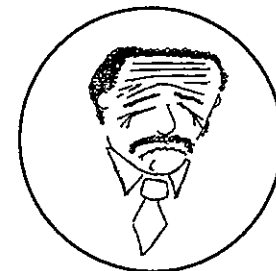
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THE WORLD'S BEST BREADS

Proud supporters of the Carlton Soccer Club.
For your nearest store call (03) 9596 6700

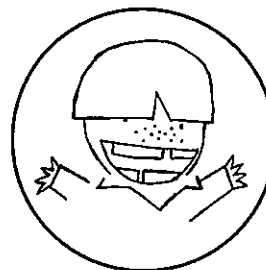


Robbie Slater's "Hedgehog"

Ramones
of
Brunswick

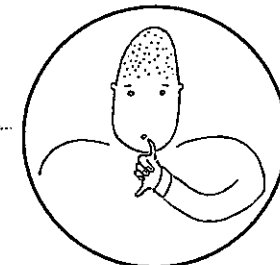


The steel wool wig and moustache combo as worn by Graeme Arnold



The 1/2 grapefruit of Dave Clarkson

NSL
Wig
Emporium



Michael Uttings "Dr. Evil"

THE TALE OF THE GREAT BATTLE

Listen to a great tale: There was a day on Earth, and in the midst of the Earth, there stood two armies. The first buoyed with Hellenic pride had such faith that they said to the other: 'Today thou shalt be destroyed at Olympic Park'.

The second host was not perturbed. For while both wore the sacred colour Blue, it was the second who carried the splendour of the Navy Shield and whose legions were indeed true. For the host of Navy had suffered much sorrow from past evils inflicted by their Hellenic foes. Yet fair and marvellous were the sons and daughters of Navy as from despair, courage and commitment was born under the prophecy of "A Dream Won't Do".

Of that battle much is said in many tales: for the meeting of the hosts of Blue will be forever known as the Great Battle, in which all of Melbourne was aflame with war.

Never had a more fierce battle been before. And it appeared as if the Hellenic forces would make true their threat, for they had pride and history on

their side. However, the Navy host possessed Hellenic pride too, and they also possessed the pride of many other great tribes, from the Northern Highlands to the Isles beyond the Tasman. This pride united when in their darkest hour a trumpet sounded in the East and a roar came from the northern garden of Olympic Park. A Navy script was set down on History's pages.

The day ended: the hubristic words of the Hellenic did not come true. For their faith rested on lies and mockery and of evil deeds which the valiant followers of Navy would not consent to.

Listen: The Hellenic forces were to some the loftiest of all on Earth. They were that which gave meaning to Life. But the Navy host did not spare them and made them live in their lie. And from the ruins of the fallen empire a Hellenic general was heard to ask: "What is there to live for?" None save the bearers of the Navy Shield can give answer.

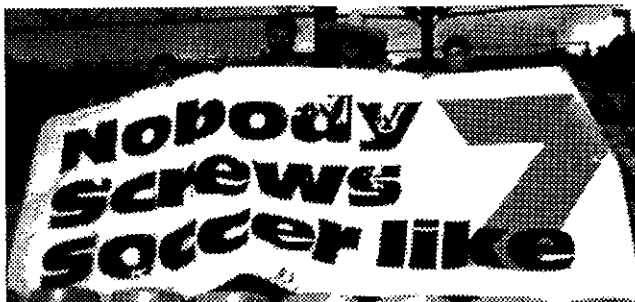
Paris of Carlton

IS CON, IS GOOD

Mr Mean vents his spleen

It can be a lot of fun being Mr Mean. Taking pot shots at people from the sidelines. Highlighting their incompetence. Hurting people's feelings. All the things that make football the great game it is. It's especially satisfying in Australia where there are so many slow moving targets. Just think of all the dinosaurs on the local scene just waiting for that meteor between the eyes, and every single motherless slimeball who stops soccer from featuring on commercial television.

People have, however, stopped me on the street on occasions and pointed out that although I've got the complaining bit right, I've not been so good with the 'do something about it' part of the equation.



To be honest, like most football fans in Australia, I didn't realise there was a 'do something about it' side to the equation. I thought that was part of being an Australian football fan.

Then I met Con.

Con is a Foundation Member, which means, like the rest of us, he's still waiting for the autographed, framed photo of the first ever Carlton team he was promised when he became a Foundation Member.

He's also waiting for an honour board with his name on it and the names of all the other Foundation Members. He's also waiting for...well, the point is that he has plenty of reasons to be cynical about the club and football in general.

But instead of taking the easy, cynical path (the one on which my footprints are firmly embedded) he's done something - he's taken direct action! He's become a football anarchist in a world full of football conformists.

His target has been Channel 7, the corporate PR arm of the AFL. You may remember some time ago a guy called David Hill sold the rights to

televise Australian soccer to Channel 7 for \$5 over 10 years.

David then moved on. He stood for Parliament, started his own railway and put in a bid to become Secretary General of the UN. Last anyone heard he was a house husband in Chatswood in suburban Sydney who keeps mumbling to himself 'mainstream supporters, mainstream supporters' over and over to anyone who will listen. Which is no one.

Anyway, Con is upset because Channel 7 have treated soccer worse than their viewers - which is pretty bad. Just think Home and Away.

Con's response has been brewing for a long time. His original plan was a corporate takeover of Channel 7 funded by the float of an internet company that didn't exist selling products it didn't produce to customers he never saw.

It was a brilliant strategy.

Con was foiled at the last minute when he discovered his preferred domain name - www.justgivemeallyourmoneyandwe'llworryaboutmakingaprofitlater.com.au was already taken by some bloke called Kerry Bullmore Packer. Bullmore. What kind of name is that?

Con quickly reverted to Plan B. Plan B consisted of a simple, yet telling strategy entitled - Bloody Big Banner.

It was the game against Sydney Olympic when the world was exposed to Con's first foray in football activism. Two Bloody Big Banners were displayed during the first half. One read 'Soccer on 7 - I'd like to see that' the other 'Nobody screws soccer like 7'.

It was a triumph. A simple telling point made in a way that was destined to piss off all the right

people and make the rest of us piss ourselves laughing.

The banners are now doing a world tour of Australia soccer grounds, such has been the reaction of supporters around the land.

Channel 2 has edited the banners out where possible, and the rest of the media (apart from one soccer newspaper) have predictably ignored the story. They have done this because they are morons incapable of expressing themselves beyond 'In the 69th minute Thompson crossed the ball and Conroy headed wide'.

We should have contempt for the lot of them. Find out where they live and set fire to their hedges. (Please ignore that last bit - Ed.)

Con is now a champion of the masses and a hero of mine. He has more things planned but he will not reveal them to me, other than a protest outside Channel 7's corporate bunker sometime in the future.

If you see Con at a game, go up and help him. If you see me, walk the other way. I have seen the future of Australian football - is Con, is good.

Mr Mean

STAND is an independent supporters group and can be contacted at seven_screws_soccer@hotmail.com



TRUMPER



Dear MBH,

I would like to sincerely apologise to all the Carlton Supporters out there. I have come to realise that the recent slump in Carlton's form is all due to me.

It all started after the magnificent win over South. Somehow during the following week someone, no doubt a disgruntled Smellas fan, stole my lucky skivvy. Now this is no ordinary skivvy, this magnificent piece of cotton has seen hundreds of Carlton AFL games and has been a regular at all Carlton Soccer matches this season. That was up until that fateful week. Ever since it was stolen we have drawn against two mediocre teams and lost at Woollongong.

Now you may think that our form slump is due to the pathetic return from our strikers and ridiculous tactic of lobbing the ball to the opposition keeper. This is infact untrue. If my skivvy had not been STOLEN I am sure we would be well clear on top of the table.

This skivvy has seen so much action and is so worn out that it is as see through as Souths attempts to be multi-cultural. My lucky green

skivvy is so holey that it goes to church. It was not thrown out by my mother when it fell apart in the wash, as some would have you believe. It is all a lie, they stole it and used it in Brazil so they wouldn't get their arses whipped. How else do you explain them only losing by two goals. It is not as though they are a good team. God Canberra drew with them.

Now I wish to inform everyone out there that I have found a new lucky skivvy that WILL NOT BE STOLEN. It is going to take us all the way. It will be in use as of tonight against the Spirit. (I hope that by the time you all read it in a few weeks we are back on track.)

Please accept my apology. I will be more security conscious in the future.

Yours Sincerely,
Trumper.

PS. It is now Tuesday February 8th and I am just revising this letter of apology to everyone. I'm afraid my new outfit only worked once. However, another attempt was made on Saturday night at Gippsland and it worked so I will give it a shot against Marconi. Sorry again.

PPS. Bus trip down to Gippy was great. BUS TRIP BACK WAS BETTER.

CARLTON ON THE WEB



It's the new Rock n' Roll, it's the future of life itself, and you can order pizza on it. For those that don't know it's the World Wide Web. So for those you are asking, what's the World Wide Web and what's it got to do with Carlton, here's a brief outline.

The Web, or the Internet, as it is known can be described in it's most basic form, as the ability to link a number of computers, by a service provider, to exchange information, still with me?

Well Carlton has a number of web presences and here we'll briefly take you through them.

The Clubs official site can be found at: www.carltonsoccer.com.au

A site is like a magazine dedicated to whatever subject it's webmaster, its author (getting a bit like Doctor Who now isn't it!) chooses. The clubs official site does all the things you would expect it to. Here you can read match previews, get team news, all the post match gossip and reports, they even have a facility where you can hear Stuart Munro's post match press conference.

It also carries all the results and tables, as well as conducting polls, the current one being which is our preferred strike force, you get to vote, although I'm not sure how much attention Stuart pays.

The club also has an e-mail squad, basically this means that they send out a daily letter via electronic mail (e-mail) to all the people who have subscribed to their mailing list. This is a good way of reminding you of what's going on at the club.

My Blue Heaven has its own website which is posted at:

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~muscovic/>

This site is pretty basic and would be a good starting point for those of you who want to keep things simple. Here you can read selected articles from previous issues of My Blue Heaven and reminisce about the history of our little fanzine.

Lets move onto the official True Blues site, which can be found at:

<http://home.primus.com.au/koddy/trueblue/htm>

Koddy runs a great site. Here you can find out all the latest gossip surrounding the True Blues and the club. Koddy has on line a True Blues songbook,

player info, club news, NSL news results, fixtures and tables as well as match reports and an e-mail facility. But greater than all that, it is home for the 24 people taking part in the tipping competition, which I must point out, I currently share the lead with John Bonacci in. Hi John, wherever you are!!

Our great traveller out there, Trumper, also has a site dedicated to the club which is at www.members.tripod.com/CarltonSoccer I think he and Koddy must have been thinking along the same lines, or gone to the same web design class as Trumpers site is quite similar to Koddy's although he keeps it up to date in his own style.

Finally we go to the most controversial site of the lot which is the home of the legends of TBT, The Provocateur, Michael W, Frankie, Koddy and the Blowfish, The Sarazen and the recently departed Underlord (R.I.P). What the hell am I talking about now, I hear you ask. Well this is where the above mentioned people, plus a few occasional contributors, seem to spend their time. It's basically a bit of a discussion forum, which takes the format of a notice board. You post up a thought on say line-ups, Venue, crowd figures, score predictions etc and see what people's responses are.

Most of the time it is fairly orderly, and I'm sure a few good friendships have been developed here. Occasionally though it can descend from hilarity and good natured banter into a quite vicious place to hang out, particularly when controversial subjects are posted by opposition fans like the Southern Stander, who supports Perth Glory, and the occasional South Melbourne fan. It was a particularly lively place to hang out after our recent win at Bob Jane. The discussion forum can be found at:

<http://www3.bravenet.com/forum/show.asp?userid=na73455>

That's basically it, although I would like to mention that one of our sponsors, Ozsoccernet, are probably the best place to find the fastest NSL results and tables service. They can be found at <http://www.ozsoccernet.com>

Happy Surfing

Richard Roberts

WIN A SIGNED CARLTON SHIRT

WHO PUT THE BALL IN THE HELLAS NET?

My Blue Heaven is giving one of our readers the opportunity of owning a Carlton away shirt (the red one) signed by the current team.

All you have to do to enter is answer the very simple question, cut out the coupon and post it to mbh at PO Box 235, Brunswick, Vic 3056.

Question: Who scored the winning goal against South Melbourne in this season's round 12 tie at Bob Jane Stadium?

The first correct answer drawn on April 14th will win. The winner will be notified by mail. All entries must be received before April 10th. Please note you must send an original coupon, photocopies will not be accepted.



My Blue Heaven would like to thank Carlton Soccer Club and their sponsors - American Express, Nike and Carryboy, for kindly donating the shirt.



Who put the ball in the Hellas net competition

Question: Who scored the winning goal against South Melbourne in this season's round 12 tie at Bob Jane Stadium?

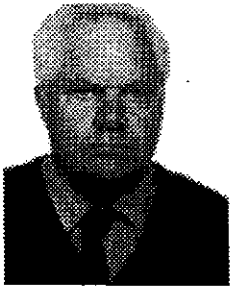
Answer _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

TRUE BLUE



There might not be many of us, but one of the great features of supporting the Carlton Soccer Club, has to be it's supporters. We seem to be different from most soccer clubs in Australia, making up for what we lack in numbers, by the passion we show for the game and our club. We

thought it would be timely to start a new feature looking at our supporters by featuring one in each edition of My Blue Heaven.

One of the characters of the club has to be John Herring, one of our most loyal, and, I'm sure he won't mind me saying, one of the more senior members of our group. John was born in the west of England prior to World War 2, and when he was 8 he moved to Wiltshire, where he lived adjacent to a cricket pitch, which no doubt inspired his love of cricket. "The Lord of the manor, an affable chap, would put half crown coins on top of the middle stump, which were yours if you bowled him", recalls John.

His mother's family being Great Western Railway people, were Swindon Town fans. John says "The first big game I went to was in the FA Cup, I believe there were 32,000, and my brother and I were some of those boys that were passed over the heads of the crowd to obtain a prime position on the touchlines. It was a cold January day and I remember the bigger kids sliding home on the icy pavements shouting 'we won, we won', that kind of thing sticks in your mind". Following a stint in Manchester, studying mathematics, and never missing a City game, John had to do National Service, so using his qualifications he joined the Navy. Following this he joined the Merchant Navy, which saw him settle in Melbourne in 1957, marrying a local girl and acquiring the half acre block, and 2 small children in the eastern suburbs.

John played football for Box Hill in the Victorian State League, alongside State League Cricket. His first football match as a spectator in Australia saw him visit Olympic Park to watch Stanley Matthews play for Blackpool before a packed house. His company then sent him to Singapore via Gippsland where he

remembers fronting for an over 30's game, only to find himself playing a Rugby match, he remembers being told "Have a go old boy, don't let the team down!!" he also played some cricket, where a match report noted his success with the ball, but his batting was marred by an indecent haste to get back to the bar. Somethings never change eh?

His greatest sporting memory was witnessing Sebastian Coe win the 1500 metres at the LA Olympics, whilst he describes the capacity crowd at the MCG for the Australia v Iran game as his greatest football moment. "I shall stand by my view that Terry Venables let us down," says John.

A foundation member from day one at Carlton, off the field John strongly believes David Hill's vision for the game was correct, although he isn't too sure about the reduction in teams for next season. Not being too sure about Friday nights, he does believe crowd numbers will increase if we all brought our friends to the games, although John describes his biggest disappointment as being, "After a great away win, you persuade your friends to come along to a game, yet you witness some mediocre performances, against Gippsland and Parramatta for example. I would love to see Conroy appear on the scoresheet - if he does he will ensure the championship for Carlton". Well said John!!

John's not sure a name change will improve attendances, but he did suggest Melbourne Kingdom as a name change "then Basil Scarsella could say "I am the Melbourne Kingdom, the Parramatta Power and the Perth Glory for ever and ever". He does have something to say about being a Carlton member. "Nice people, great beer garden for those who want it, plenty of room for those that don't", although he feels strongly that club management should not underestimate the value of an after game venue, with the highest priority being given to visits of this space by players and officials. He also thinks that the Olympic Park management should be spoken to as "No draft beer, slow service, probably not helped by having to pour cans into plastic cups and as for 6 security guards in the members bar after the match? UGG".

So there goes John, some interesting background and thoughts, whatever you may think he's got his priorities right, football, beer, beer, football.

Keep watching this space, next time it could be you.

Richard Roberts

TEN GREAT GAMES

10) 2-1 v Perth 4/10/97 Home

The club got off on the right foot on a lovely Spring day in 97 with David Cervinski, and Danny 'You f#\$*ing donkey!' Allsop scoring the goals. It got me interested enough to go again, (just to abuse Allsop) and the rest was history.

9) 3-1 v Adelaide 18/10/97 H

It was the days of the Music Men and Spot The Ball, sitting by yourself because you didn't know anyone, as well as the traditional powerhouses of the competition being brushed aside, as Carlton staked a claim for serious attention.

8) 4-2 v Knights 1/3/98 A

Jonesy gave his 'fans' from Sunshine a pair ... of goals. Con scored, and Deano got an O.G! Those were the days.

7) 4-0 v Wollongong 11/10/98 H

A new season and an extraordinary hat-trick from Simon Colosimo. You could never complain about the chips at Optus.

6) 2-0 v Marconi 19/12/98 A

We all went to the Carrington, and saw an excellent performance against much fancied opposition, capped off by Marco Bresciano stealing the ball on the intersection of the half-way and touch lines, then running all the way into the six yard box before slamming it in' onion bag.

5) 5-2 v Brisbane 21/2/99 H

Four on debut from Archie, and icing on the cake from Sterg. At this point we looked likely to repeat our finals run. But lost 8 games in a row instead. Go figure. The day of the six a side too, when I discovered that, as a player, Trumper makes a very good supporter.

4) 4-4 v South Melbourne. 22/11/98 A

2-0 up, 2-2, 3-2 up, 4-3 down, then our FORMER hero Andy (Traitor) Vlahos, picked up a delicate through ball from Marco B and found the far corner via the post. Cue a lot of beer thrown through the air, and Carlton fans getting to know each other intimately. And we did it with ten men, so it felt like a win.

3) 5-0 v South Melbourne. 12/4/98 A

Even though I saw it I still can't believe it. Not so much the result, but the extraordinary

performances of Marusic and Bresciano in particular. Andy V started the slaughter, before Jonesy converted from the spot, and then went one better with a free kick (those were the days!!) Marusic turned on a little coin and whacked in the fourth straight after half time, and we were rewarded for 25 minutes solid abuse of opposition fans when Marco strode past two defenders and almost split the net open.

This was the first night when Carlton fans all stood together (in the rain) and sang. A sort of coming of age, and the best football I've ever seen by any NSL team ever.

2) 2-1 V South Melbourne 19/12/99 A

Much better than sex ... I bet.

1) The next one!!!!!!

Michael W



BORN OR MADE?



We probably all agree that the great soccer players are born and not made. The Peles, the Beckenbauers, the Bests, the Matthews', the di Stefanos, the Puskas', all born to greatness.

But the key issue is that they were all born players, not made. Let's face it if you went out to make a player you'd hardly choose the body dimensions of a Puskas. And you'd certainly put a bit more beef onto Matthews' frame.

There are hosts of players who have been made, of course, journeymen seizing on the meagre talent issued to them and working assiduously through countless hours of training and by-rote tactics to keep their place in the pantheon of the game. But they are rarely great players. No, the great ones are born.

Is the same true of supporters? Are the great ones born or made? In all probability, like the great players, the great supporters are born not made. If you doubt this imagine the criteria for making a supporter. Let's eavesdrop an instruction session between a Supporter Coach (SC) and a Trainee Supporter (TS).

SC It starts about Wednesday, the build up for the game.

TS Wednesday? I thought the match was on Saturday.

SC Well it's Wednesday because Sunday, Monday and Tuesday are made for either re-living the game and gloating or forgetting the game and hiding. By Wednesday that's all over and you can start preparing for the next game.

TS What happens on Thursday?

SC You pick the team.

TS I thought the Coach did that.

SC In the real world, yes. But who's citing the real world here. You're a Supporter now, or will be when I've finished with you, forget the real world.

TS Friday?

SC Mainly nerves. After you've told the players who's playing. Friday night you fall asleep planning the set up; backs, midfielders, strikers.

TS Saturday?

SC GAME DAY. The most important day of the week. You don't talk to anyone at breakfast. You move around a lot, it eases the tension. You make sure your scarf is there where you threw it after the last game. You skip lunch because it would only make you throw up. You compensate by downing as much beer as you can in the shortest time. You grab your scarf and leave early so you can maximise the wait and the tension.

TS What about the game? What happens there?

SC Everything and nothing. You arrive at the ground like a pilgrim approaching his Mecca. The stands are sacred, the terraces washed in the blood of those gone before, the turf is holy. You greet your comrades as fellow pilgrims: Well met, mate, how goes it? Alright, mate, alright. How is it with you? Alright mate, alright. These are ritual greetings.

TS Before the game, what happens?

SC A multitude of things. You go through a checklist and reassure yourself. I'm wearing the socks I wore when we beat City; check. Hang on a minute, I can't remember the last time we beat City. OK, I'm wearing the socks I wore last time we should have beaten City; check. I climbed the terrace steps two at a time and I didn't tread on any cracks or where any grass is growing; check. My scarf hasn't been washed since the last time we won the cup; check. It's bloody dirty, good job they discovered penicillin. I've got my fingers crossed and said "please God" forty times (one for each of the players on the senior list); check. I've bought the programme and flipped through every page without reading a single word; check. I've memorised the opposition players I want to have a go at; check. I've worked out where the opposition supporters are and the quickest line of retreat; check.

TS And during the game?

SC The gamut, no, the full gamut. You retain your nervousness right up to the Kick Off, but once

the ball is kicked you're into it. You surge forward with each probing thrust. There's a quick corner, an inswinger; it's headed on, a shot, just past the post. Like the others around you, you groan and then leap to support the team. It's important they know when they've done the right thing. After all, if it had gone in it would have been a goal. We are the greatest. You surge down the opposite wing, the ball comes in, you check, yes the striker's there, he chests it down and shoots in one movement, sheer poetry, but the ball flies over the bar. Still, you nearly scored again. You give it to the opposition. Too easy, mate, too easy. Just a matter of time. Your mob are pushovers. And a goal does come. Their midfield genius, Mad Nobby, strokes the ball forward into the path of their striker. Onside, drat. He checks and beats two of your defenders before angling the ball top left into the net. Your goalie never even moved. You groan. Lucky goal, that. Sheer luck. At half time you queue ten minutes for a leak but when a roar behind you announces the recommencement of the battle you decide you never really wanted one anyway. There's been a change. One of the young forwards has been brought on. He's an immediate hero when he takes a throw in. Did you see that? What a throw in, what a talent. From the throw you move forward. A blast from forty yards out that was meant as a pass hits the post, rebounds to your striker who hits it back against the crossbar; it drops on the goalkeeper's back and trickles across the line. All is chaos and mayhem. Did you see that? What a goal. What a move. All down to The Kid's throw. There's a minute left. You have the ball, The Kid flicks it on after leaving Mad Nobby in his wake. Your striker shoots. Their goalkeeper dives full stretch to his left and stops the shot with a fingertip. No, you yell, bloody hell. If only. The ball rolls to their left back who slots it into the path of Mad Nobby who's just picked himself up and told The Kid just what bits of his anatomy he'll lose if he pulls a stunt like that again. Nobby moves forward like a dervish. The Kid's nowhere. Three on two. No, you yell. Bloody no. Like a rabbit in headlights you know what's coming. And you're so right. Your goalkeeper's sent the wrong way. The ball is side footed into the net.

Your defenders hold their heads in their hands. You stand ashen faced. Grown men around you shed a tear. Bloody hell. A game we should have won. Another year for the socks to survive.

TS And did I enjoy that?

SC Enjoy? Who said anything about enjoyment? You are devastated. Too upset to drink. You can't go to work on Monday. The others will give you heaps. With a bit of luck you can stretch the sickie to cover Tuesday. And by Wednesday you can start preparing for the next game. Now, will I see you for the next session? It's entitled: How to cope with relegation.

TS Look. I'll call you, OK.

Ergo. You'd have to be born to it to undergo that regime for fun. You wouldn't pick that for your entertainment, would you?

Bluie Stewie

PENALTY OFFENSES

Now that the season is approaching the half way mark it is appropriate to reflect on the penalties that various football associations are imposing for offenses which in the past have not been penalised.

A random list obtained on the net are as follows:

Irish FA	bogging	2 weeks
English FA	mumming	4 weeks
Welsh FA	Leaking	1 week
New Zealand FA	crotcheting	1 week
PNG Highlands	eating referee	1 week
PNG Highlands	eating Ball	life
Irish FA	spudding	6 weeks
USA Football	chewing	4 weeks
Argentine FA	cocaine use	exile to Cuba

These are just a few of the listed offenses and more are forthcoming, and clubs are warned of increased penalties.

On the local scene a report of striking, which has disappeared from the news, attracted a suspension of 2 years. The ACTU are expected to convene a special meeting over this matter and will be reported in the next My Blue Heaven.

Deadeye Dick

KODDY'S NSL HOTSHOTS!

My NSL highlights start with the first game of the season away to Auckland. 3-0 was a great first up result and we certainly looked the goods. Credit must go to Deano though. His penalty save was crucial as it could have changed to whole complexion of the game at 2-1.

Round 2 provided a "lowlight" as our first attendance at the Park was a miserable 4105 (or 700 in real terms). The game wasn't much better either and we were embarrassed by Deano's decision to go for a walk on the wild side. Two points lost.

Round 3 would have to be a major highlight as Carlton put in a sizzling second half performance to sink Marconi 4-0. Conroy should have scored his first, as he and Alex had chances with only the keeper to beat. The game's highlight was a scorching strike from Joey Tricarico (remember him?) and the Charles Dickens erupted...Ah, the good old days.

Round 4 and doesn't it feel good stick it up the Knights. Only 2-1 but the lads were always in control. Lubo supplied us with a scorcher of his own from well outside the box. It was also good to see the True Blues sitting together for the first time. I think everyone would agree that we did our best to make some noise and have a great time in the process. Deano gave us a wave on his 50th appearance.

Was Archie offside or not when he scored his easiest goal of the season against Canberra? I reckon McPherson's header forward wasn't intended for him so the goal stands.

The game against Brisbane was a beauty and Archie scored another great goal with a lob. Packer could have had a couple if his shots had more venom. Great action at both ends.

Losses to Parra and Perth meant we had to stuff Canberra and we did. We had great possession against Parramatta and again failed to produce the goal we needed. Perth was just a joke. At 40°C we looked hot, tired and slow. Conroy's dismissal was another black mark against referees in this league.

Time for the blockbuster at Bob Jane and it didn't disappoint. Not a classic in classic footballing

terms, but a classic for the tension and the great finish where we snatched victory at the last hour. Stabber, all is forgiven!!!! He's been our saviour on many an occasion now. Slater killed Lozza and Slim lashed out and was needlessly sent off.

Two draws later and the fans are getting mighty disgruntled. We're dominating too many games and not scoring. We should be burying these teams. Newcastle came looking for a draw and got one. We then get stuffed at Wollongong in a terrible display of nothingness. Great goal by Moss for Spirit against the Glory. One of the goals of the season. The Glory reply by playing the most boring half of football when they're a man up I've ever seen.

The lads made up for it in a great game at Oly Park against the Spirit. Great spirit was shown by the fans of both sides and with Carlton pushing forward relentlessly, the goal came late again courtesy of Stabber once again. South Melbourne get annihilated by Olympic in probably the best team performance of the season so far. Boutsianis's great free kick hits the crossbar but the Kingz impress in putting four past the Glory. I'm glad Thorpe got sent off. I can't stand him.

After all our good work, we stuff up again at Spirit and then at home to Olympic. The writing is on the wall. We have the side to beat these teams. There's no doubt about it. We just can't put it together when it counts. If this problem can't be worked out then we're in trouble. There's no question that we need to play in be finals to ensure our survival.

Tricky and Colosimo....please come back!!!!!!

Koddy



FEBRUARY, 2000

So it is that time again that MBH is looking for new and inspiring articles to be published, funny though I seem to be having a sense of deja vu instead of feeling new and inspired.

Once again we (Carlton) have started off the season with a blast only to whimper into the mid-season. Again the crowds are staying away in their droves and there seems to be no explanation for it (or cure for that matter). Again the Western stand is as silent as a cemetery at mid-night and it is left to the few dozen in the Eastern stand to provide anything that can be classed as atmosphere at the games. And yes once again there seems to be rumblings from the supporters as to the venue, the game time, the marketing, the television coverage etc.

So where have we come since the last edition of MBH? Not very far it seems.

I have to admit to not being around the club at all in January as I spent that month with my family in France. Yes we did have a great time and one of the memorable moments for us was going to a game of soccer, or football or just 'foot' in French. We went to see Marseilles v Montpellier which ended up in a tame 0 - 0 draw. That was disappointing in itself as we wanted to see the crowd reaction to a goal so we felt like we had been cheated however the fun of the night was in watching the supporters not the game.

I had heard that in passionate European football most of the action occurs off the field not on it but to really see it in the flesh was amazing. Funnily just like at Olympic Park the vocal and non-vocal elements of the crowd reside on different parts of the ground, I had thought that it would be more mixed around the ground.

The vocal crowd stands (in their seats) behind both goals and the more subdued and family patrons sit on the flanks. Behind the goals there is a sea of colour, people waving flags of all different nations (I didn't see Australia though), the singing and chanting from the crowd is conducted by the cheer squad leader from a podium set in the stand with his own microphone! Next to him there are a dozen drums set up that are manned by seasoned drummers and this is mirrored on both ends of the ground, so you can imagine all the noise and atmosphere that is going on for the full 90+ minutes.

We left the game wondering how even 10% of this could be replicated at Carlton. (No offence to the True Blues I know they try their hardest.) The only time we ever come close to this is when we play South Melbourne and hundreds of supporters come out of the woodwork, but why do they all hide away again during the rest of the season?

I am sure by this stage in the development of Carlton most supporters, from the ground up to the boardroom, are scratching their heads trying to find the answers and the culprit.

Have I done something wrong? Maybe I am not bringing enough friends or family to the games? Or is it the bloke that sits in front of me? Surely he can bring at least two more friends? Maybe it is the marketing department that is not doing it's job right? Or could it be the appalling food that is served at the ground that is keeping them away? I know, it is the fault of the government, after all it is always the fault of the government isn't it?

So who is to blame?

It is interesting to note that Carlton are struggling to bring in the numbers in their third season and yet Melbourne Storm in their second season were playing to sell out crowds in the same venue as we play in! I think that alone can put the argument against Olympic Park to rest.

I can go on forever here around in circles trying to find answers and I don't think I am going to get any. The only thing left for me to say is that at the start of 2000 we, as Carlton supporters and members, need to take a very hard look at ourselves as to what we are and what we would really like to be.

Kevin Milstein

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Dear MBH

OUR HOME IS NOT A TENT

We started with a dream, a passion; we wanted a club to truly represent our ideals for an Australian Soccer Club. A club who cared about the game and treated its supporters with respect and not as mugs. A club that would embrace lovers of this beautiful game, make them feel special and wanted. There are so many of us who want the club to succeed on and off the park, because that is what members and supporters deserve today and for the next generation.

SUPPORTERS TREATED AS MUGS

Olympic Park is the most unfriendly Soccer venue in Melbourne. Difficult to get to, parking is difficult, even with our crowds. We are treated as unwelcome strangers. The bar at the western stand where we meet after the game is sterile, devoid of our history, memorabilia or atmosphere. Why can't we have a framed-signed jumper of the club from each season? Posters of our teams over the years, pictures of present and past players in full flight and playing for club and country.

But what really pisses me off is that the bar closes at 10pm. 1/2 an hour after the game finishes and sometimes it is closed as the game finishes. How we long for the days at Optus Oval when the games finished at 8pm 1/2 an hour later the players, coaches and support staff came to the George Harris stand. We cheered them one by one, thanked them personally and then enjoyed a meal with family and friends. We were truly a soccer family then. Now only Mark Atkinson makes a semi regular appearance. What an irony that the greatest cheer this year was given to Marcus Stergiopolous, an ex Carlton player, but still supporter favourite who came to see us after the recent Auckland Kingz game.

I'm not advocating going back to Optus Oval but the club should have kept the positive things from those times and made sure they continued at Olympic Park.

PROMISES, PROMISES, PROMISES

Do what you say you will do and don't take supporters for granted. The club promised the foundation members an honour board. Who cares if the club hasn't sold the original 1,000 limited memberships? Put the bloody thing up, make us proud and recognise the commitment that we made in the future of the club three years ago.

We were promised a True Blues room at Olympic Park to carry on the good work that was started in the Jack Reilly Bar. A great place to meet before the game, to catch up with other supporters and talk about the game, our players, coaches and the clubs welfare in general. A place where the True Blues organised the Christmas Party with Santa, players and in particular junior supporters. A place where we sang songs we made up, a place we called home.

MARKETING, MARKETING, MARKETING

We got told about the plan. Who has ever seen it? I guess it doesn't matter because it hasn't worked. I'm sick to death about having to market to the English supporter, the

Scottish supporter, the Italian supporter etc etc Yes we should market to all of the above and more, but most of all we should market to the Australian Soccer Supporter who turned up in their droves for the Australia v Brazil scratch match. They were basically young... The soccer supporters of today and tomorrow.

Over the years we have played a great brand of football. Games equal to or better than the Premier League, Serie A and the Bundesliga, with the added bonus of being able to thank the players personally, unheard of in other parts of the world. How sad it is to have changed that bearing in mind the loyal supporters the club has.

Loyal supporters like John McGauran (Trumper) who travels to all the games, including interstate matches, makes huge banners and supplies streamers to the kids. Sally Orpin who gives up her valuable time with Richard Roberts to produce My Blue Heaven, a great read about the club and its supporters. It certainly fills the void of the clubs regular newsletter, which was promised but certainly not delivered. John Toussos part owner of Poytonz who knows the alienation that going to Olympic Park has brought to the supporters and has offered to open his restaurant after the next away match against South Melbourne on a Sunday, put on entertainment and finger foods free of charge and have the players and families come back and mingle with supporters. What a great idea, and what a great supporter. Sam Prenesti who said to the club "we would personally welcome every new member to the club, sit with us during the game and meet the players afterwards". He was told yes, yes, yes, what a great idea, unfortunately he is still waiting for the information 18 months after the suggestion.

The club has done some positive and innovative things. The feeder club system has enormous potential, but you cannot tap into this resource if the kids you have made members can't or will not come to the game because of the location and time.

In summary the club should re evaluate whom it is that they want as supporters and members. Fulfil the promises it has made. Take the club to a soccer friendly venue and time. Have a supporter/member room to meet the players. Market to the Australian Soccer Supporters and get professional sports administrators to run the club.

We owe it to the next generation of kids who get together in the park, lay down their school bags for goals, who play for the love of the game and who want local heroes and a local team to follow and be proud of.

If you feel the same way or you have other concerns please write to me so I can collate them and if possible present them to the owners of the club.

Nick Monteleone

Foundation Life Member No 40, True Blue member No 3
931 High Street, Reservoir Vic 3073

Write to 'In Off The Post' at:
my blue heaven, PO Box 235, Brunswick, Vic. 3056
or e-mail: mbheaven@hotmail.com

FOOTBALL SHORTS

Lozza is a ...

Well the lardy one really lived up to his nickname when we visited BJ stadium for the first time this season. He spat the dummy so far it was allegedly found in Frankston. It's still funny even now, seeing him tantruming his way to a red card and having to be dragged from the pitch... poor baby.

Please sir can we have some more

AFL seeks more TV games

With Soccer getting such bad treatment by television stations, FS was amused (not) by an article in The Age stating that the AFL and Channel 7 were to meet to discuss increasing Television coverage of the Ansett Cup.

This was as a result of a scheduling dilemma for Channel 7, as they also had commitments to tennis and golf. No mention of their commitment to National League Soccer though. It's a funny old game when a meaningless pre-season tournament gets the full TV treatment and a National tournament is ignored. FS says it's time to make a STAND.

Goodonya Bob

The good bloke of the month award goes to Newcastle Breakers' keeper - Bob Caitlin. Anyone who frequents the beer garden at OP will be aware that visiting goalkeepers have to endure continual volleys of verbal from the mob behind the goals - the self titled 'dark side'.

Quite often this results in the keeper getting very upset and losing their cool, which in itself is pretty amusing. If it puts them off enough to

concede the odd goal, then the 'dark side' should be credited on the scoresheet. However when their ire is aimed at members of their own team they need to question what they are achieving.

When Bob came to town he was receiving all the usual abuse, which started during the warm-up and went on from there. In the second half when at the beer garden end the crowd was relentless, but Bob took it all in good humour. After much comment on the size of his arse, he oblidgingly wadded his bum at all and reducing the dark side to laughter. Goodonya Bob for taking it in good heart and having a great sense of humour. All together now "Who ate all the pies..."

Getting shirty

After a certain Melbourne club's Brazilian adventure, a local supporters club of one of the team's they played heard that one of the pale blues had swopped shirts with David Beckham after the match and were keen to get the player in question as a special guest for their next meeting. The idea was that the player could talk about what it was like playing against the famous club, meeting Beckham, and show off the shirt.

However when the supporters club approached the club, they were given short shrift by an administrator there. He said there was no chance of them even asking the player to go as they believed that the player would be mugged for the shirt.

Where does this person get such a negative opinion of football supporters? Maybe from his own backyard.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



Andy Harper



Einstein



Andy Vlahos



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